Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) A slot machine comprising:

a plurality of reels, each of the reels comprising a reel strip bearing a plurality of <u>different</u> <u>first</u> discrete symbols and a continuous graphical element extending between adjacent ones of the discrete <u>first</u> symbols such that the <u>first</u> discrete symbols are thematically unified by the graphical element;

a processor operable to rotate the reels and stop the reels to place the <u>first</u> discrete symbols on the reels in visual association with a display area, and to award a <u>base</u> <u>game</u> payout responsive to an alignment of a plurality of <u>first</u> discrete symbols associated with a winning combination along a selected payline,

<u>wherein at least one of said reels comprises a video reel and wherein said processor is</u> <u>operable to, for said at least one of said reels, move a selected second discrete</u> <u>symbol relative to said continuous graphical element and determine an award,</u> <u>said award being related to a degree of said movement and being independent of</u> <u>any payline.</u>

2.   (Cancelled).

3.   (Currently Amended) The slot machine of claim 1, wherein ~~at least one of said reels~~ ~~comprises a video reel and wherein said processor is operable to, for said at least one of said~~ ~~reels, move a selected one of said discrete symbols relative to said continuous graphical element~~ <u>wherein said processor is operable to move the selected second discrete symbol relative to said</u> <u>continuous graphical element</u> during a bonus game.

4.   (Original) The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the discrete symbols are superimposed over the graphical element.

5.   (Original) The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the graphical element includes a trail.

6.   (Original) The slot machine of claim 5, wherein the trail is selected from a group consisting of a road and a board game path.

7.   (Original) The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the reel is simulated on a video display.

8.   (Original) The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the reel is physical and driven by a stepper motor.

9.   (Currently Amended) A slot machine comprising:

a plurality of reels, each of the reels comprising a reel strip bearing a plurality of discrete symbol positions and a continuous graphical element extending between adjacent ones of the discrete symbol positions such that the discrete symbol positions are thematically unified by the graphical element, each of the reel strips also bearing a plurality of different first discrete symbols, [[a]] said first discrete symbol in at least one of symbols being associated with said respective discrete symbol positions; and

a processor programmed to award a base game payout responsive to an alignment of a plurality one or more of the first discrete symbols associated with a winning combination along a selected payline,

wherein at least one of said reels comprises a video reel and wherein said processor is programmed to, for said at least one of said reels, move a selected second discrete symbol relative to said continuous graphical element during a bonus game, an award being related to a degree of said movement and independent of any payline.

10.   (Previously Presented) The slot machine of claim 9, further including means for rotating and stopping the reel and the discrete symbol to place a portion of the reel in visual association with a display area.

11.   (Original) The slot machine of claim 9, wherein the discrete symbol is superimposed over the graphical element.

12.   (Original) The slot machine of claim 9, wherein the graphical element includes a trail.

13.   (Original) The slot machine of claim 12, wherein the trail is selected from a group consisting of a road and a board game path.

3

14.   (Original) The slot machine of claim 9, wherein the reel is simulated on a video display.

15.   (Original) The slot machine of claim 9, wherein the reel is physical and driven by a stepper motor.

16.   (Cancelled).

17.   (Previously Presented) The slot machine of claim 9, wherein the payout accumulates based on each discrete symbol position traversed by the discrete symbol.

18.   (Currently Amended) A method of conducting a slot game on a slot machine controlled by a processor, comprising:
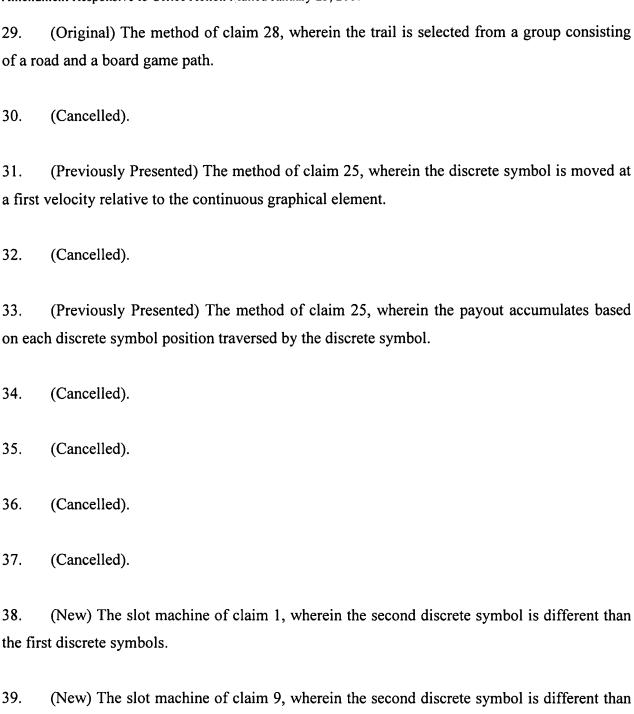
    receiving a wager from a player; and

    rotating a plurality of reels, <u>at least one of the reels comprising a video reel,</u> each of the reels comprising a reel strip bearing a plurality of <u>different first</u> discrete symbols and a continuous graphical element extending between adjacent ones of the <u>first</u> discrete symbols such that the <u>first</u> discrete symbols are thematically unified by the graphical element;

    stopping the reels to place a portion of each reel in visual association with a display area; ~~and~~

    providing a payout responsive to an alignment of a winning combination of <u>first</u> discrete symbols along a payline in said display area<u>;</u>

    <u>moving a selected second discrete symbol relative to said continuous graphical element;</u> <u>and</u>

    <u>providing an award related to a degree of said movement and being independent of any payline.</u>

19.   (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the discrete symbols are superimposed over the graphical element.

20.   (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the graphical element includes a trail.

4

21.   (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the trail is selected from a group consisting of a road and a board game path.

22.   (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the reel is simulated on a video display.

23.   (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the reel is physical and driven by a stepper motor.

24.   (Original) The method of claim 18, further including determining a payout based, at least in part, on the portion of the reel associated with the display area.

25.   (Currently Amended) A method of conducting a slot game on a slot machine controlled by a processor, comprising:

        receiving a wager from a player;

        rotating a video reel, the video reel bearing a plurality of discrete symbol positions and a continuous graphical element extending between adjacent ones of the discrete symbol positions such that the discrete symbol positions are thematically unified by the graphical element;

        moving a discrete symbol between the adjacent ones of the discrete symbol positions as the video reel is rotated; and

        determining a payout based on ~~the~~ a degree of movement of the discrete symbol between the adjacent ones of the discrete symbol positions as the video reel is rotated, said act of determining being independent of any selected pay line.

26.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, further including stopping the reel to place a portion of the video reel in visual association with a display area.

27.   (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the discrete symbol is superimposed over the graphical element.

28.   (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the graphical element includes a trail.

5

29.   (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the trail is selected from a group consisting of a road and a board game path.

30.   (Cancelled).

31.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the discrete symbol is moved at a first velocity relative to the continuous graphical element.

32.   (Cancelled).

33.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the payout accumulates based on each discrete symbol position traversed by the discrete symbol.

34.   (Cancelled).

35.   (Cancelled).

36.   (Cancelled).

37.   (Cancelled).

38.   (New) The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the second discrete symbol is different than the first discrete symbols.

39.   (New) The slot machine of claim 9, wherein the second discrete symbol is different than the first discrete symbols.

40.   (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the second discrete symbol is different than the first discrete symbols.